

10/521349

ART 34 AMDT

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PRODUCT CONTAINER WITH LOCKING END CAP**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

lkb 5 This application is a 371 of PCT/US03/22528, filed on 7/17/2003
lkb which claims benefit of 60/396,504, file on
lkb Field of the Invention 7/17/2002.

The present invention relates generally to the field of product packaging, and in particular to product containers having a locking end cap.

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Description of the Prior Art

Product packaging serves a number of different functions, including: protecting the packaged product from accidental damage, attractively displaying the packaged product, and preventing theft or tampering. In addition, it is desirable for a package to be as inexpensive to manufacture as possible.

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There is an ongoing need in the packaging industry for new package designs.

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SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A first aspect of the invention provides a package, comprising:

25 a sleeve including at least one end defining an opening, the sleeve including at least one locking tab extending therefrom, the locking tab including a locking edge, the locking tab being folded inwards into the opening; and

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a rigid end cap including a substantially continuous outer surface that is dimensioned to fit closely within the opening, the end cap further including a rim overhanging the outer surface such that, when the end cap is inserted into the opening, the rim engages the sleeve end and prevents the end cap from being inserted further into the opening, the outer surface including at least one channel for receiving the locking tab, the channel having a ledge that engages the locking edge of the locking tab to prevent the end cap from being removed from the sleeve opening, wherein the